

Where In the World is PARADISE ???

The definition for the word 'paradise' is:

1. a place of bliss
2. a region of supreme delight
3. a pleasure-garden, or beautiful park.

Tonight, we'll look at Paradise in 3 locations.

First, we'll see

Paradise On the Earth

Gen 2:8-10 And the LORD God planted a **garden** eastward in Eden;
and there he put the man whom he had formed.

9 And out of the ground made the LORD God to grow

- every tree that is * pleasant to the sight,
 * and good for food;
- the tree of life also in the midst of the garden,
- and the tree of knowledge of good and evil.

10 And a river went out of Eden to water the garden;
and from thence it was parted, and became into four heads.

We're told there were lots of trees there in the Garden of Eden, and a river.

Ezek. 28:13 calls Eden, the 'Garden of God.'

God placed Adam, the first man, in the garden to tend and care for it. That was Man's Responsibility:

Gen 2:15 And the LORD God took the man, and put him into the garden of Eden to dress it and to keep it.

God even let Adam name the animals. That was Man's Privilege:

Gen 2:19 And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air; and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them: and whatsoever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof.

God formed a woman from man's rib. She was to be Man's Helper:

Gen 2:22-23 And the rib, which the LORD God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto the man.

23 And Adam said, This is now bone of my bones, and flesh of my flesh: she shall be called Woman, because she was taken out of Man.

But Adam's helper, Eve, persuaded him the wrong way. She enticed him to sin, and eat the forbidden fruit God had told them NOT to eat. So they were ashamed the next time God came to meet with them:

Gen. 3:8 And they heard the voice of the LORD God walking in the garden in the cool of the day: and Adam and his wife hid themselves from the presence of the LORD God amongst the trees of the garden.

So Paradise was lost not because of God but because of man! His pride and greed got him into sin. Yes, Adam is the one to blame. And today the earth is in an even worse condition.

Now, the vegetables have to be farmed, and man will die and turn back to dirt:

Gen 3:17-19 And unto Adam he said, Because thou hast hearkened unto the voice of thy wife, and hast eaten of the tree, of which I commanded thee, saying, Thou shalt not eat of it: cursed is the ground for thy sake; in sorrow shalt thou eat of it all the days of thy life; 18 Thorns also and thistles shall it bring forth to thee; and thou shalt eat the herb of the field; 19 In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.

So God kicked Adam and his wife Eve out of His earthly Paradise:

Gen 3:23-24 Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken.

24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

When Adam 'fell' into sin all creation fell with him into a sin-cursed state.

Rom 8:22 For we know that the whole creation groaneth and travaileth in pain together until now.

Now every person has inherited a fallen, sinful nature from Adam:

Rom 5:12 Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned:

Man's greatest problem is his SIN. Sin is the root of all man's troubles and misery.

We understand that God's Garden in Eden, a Paradise on earth, has passed away because of man's sin.

Even the animal kingdom turned wild and untamed after the flood in Noah's day:

Gen 9:2 And the fear of you and the dread of you shall be upon every beast of the earth, and upon every fowl of the air, upon all that moveth upon the earth, and upon all the fishes of the sea; into your hand are they delivered.

But we also understand from scripture, that
God's Garden Paradise in Eden, will one day be restored on earth.

When John wrote prophetic letters to the 7 churches, he told the church of Ephesus:

Rev 2:7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Since we know that this is not presently located on earth it stands to reason, that

'Paradise Restored' is a promise for a future time the 'Ages to Come.'

Places that are now barren, will then spring forth with vegetation. Man will no longer 'eat his bread by the sweat of his face' (Gen. 3:19).

The curse on the ground will be lifted:

Isa 35:1-2 The wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.
2 It shall blossom abundantly, and rejoice even with joy and singing: the glory of Lebanon shall be given unto it, the excellency of Carmel and Sharon, they shall see the glory of the LORD, and the excellency of our God.

Physical healing will be in effect again, as the earth's curse is removed:

Isa 35:5-7 Then the eyes of the blind shall be opened, and the ears of the deaf shall be unstopped.
6 Then shall the lame man leap as an hart, and the tongue of the dumb sing: for in the wilderness shall waters break out, and streams in the desert.
7 And the parched ground shall become a pool, and the thirsty land springs of water: in the habitation of dragons, where each lay, shall be grass with reeds and rushes.

Animal life will also change back to its original state:

Isa 11:6-9 The wolf also shall dwell with the lamb,
 and the leopard shall lie down with the kid;
 and the calf and the young lion and the fatling together;
 and a little child shall lead them.
 7 And the cow and the bear shall feed;
 their young ones shall lie down together:
 and the lion shall eat straw like the ox.
 8 And the sucking child shall play on the hole of the asp,
 and the weaned child shall put his hand on the cockatrice' den.
 9 They shall not hurt nor destroy in all my holy mountain:
 for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the LORD, as the waters cover the sea.

The Mountain of God, Mt. Zion, upon which sits the city of Jerusalem, will regain its holiness and beauty in 'Paradise,' as Christ reigns there over the whole earth:

Psa 48:1-3 Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised in the city of our God,
 in the mountain of his holiness.
 2 Beautiful for situation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion,
 on the sides of the north, the city of the great King.
 3 God is known in her palaces for a refuge.

Isa 24:23 Then the moon shall be confounded, and the sun ashamed, when the LORD of hosts shall reign in mount Zion, and in Jerusalem, and before his ancients gloriously.

Joel 2:32 And it shall come to pass, that whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be delivered: for in mount Zion and in Jerusalem shall be deliverance, as the LORD hath said, and in the remnant whom the LORD shall call.

Israel will get their blessings then:

Obadiah 1:17 But upon mount Zion shall be deliverance, and there shall be holiness; and the house of Jacob shall possess their possessions.

.... And the Gentiles will be blessed THROUGH Israel, just as God promised Abram when He first called him:

Gen 12:3 And I will bless them that bless thee, and curse him that curseth thee:
 and in thee shall all families of the earth be blessed.

Matt 12:21 And in his name shall the Gentiles trust.

The government will be just:

Jer 23:5 Behold, the days come, saith the LORD, that I will raise unto David a righteous Branch, and a King shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment and justice in the earth.

War and bloodshed will be abolished:

Isa 2:4 And he shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people: and they shall beat their swords into plowshares, and their spears into pruninghooks: nation shall not lift up sword against nation, neither shall they learn war any more.

Everyone will acknowledge God's glory then:

Isa 40:5 And the glory of the LORD shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together: for the mouth of the LORD hath spoken it.

Those will be some of the conditions when Jesus reigns on the earth.
It will indeed be **Paradise Restored ... on the earth!**

Now, let's look at the 2nd place we find

Paradise ... Inside the Earth ... Where the 'Redeemed' Dead Went

When Jesus was crucified on the cross, a repentant thief called on Him and was promised they would be together again in Paradise ... **after death** ... that same day:

Luke 23:39-43 And one of the malefactors which were hanged railed on him, saying, If thou be Christ, save thyself and us.

40 But the other answering rebuked him, saying, Dost not thou fear God, seeing thou art in the same condemnation?

41 And we indeed justly; for we receive the due reward of our deeds: but this man hath done nothing amiss.

42 And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

43 And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee,

To day shalt thou be with me in paradise.

Where was Paradise located at that time? The answer is 'where Jesus went when He died.' That was to a place called Hell:

Psa 16:10 For thou wilt not leave my soul in hell;
neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption.

Jesus went to a place in Hell called 'Paradise.'

At that time, ALL dead people went DOWN into the center of the earth.

There, in the UNSEEN, invisible world the place of the departed souls.

God made 2 separate areas, or compartments:

- One side had a beautiful garden (or Paradise).

In this next passage it is also called 'Abraham's bosom.'

- The other side of the nether (meaning 'lower') world was a place of torment for the wicked dead.

We can see this in a story Jesus told earlier about two men who both died. One was a rich man, and the other was a beggar named Lazarus, who used to lay at the gate of the rich man's home.

Luke 16:22-26 And it came to pass,
that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels into Abraham's bosom:
the rich man also died, and was buried;

23 And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments,
and seeth Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.

24 And he cried and said, Father Abraham, have mercy on me, and send Lazarus,
that he may dip the tip of his finger in water, and cool my tongue;
for I am tormented in this flame.

25 But Abraham said, Son, remember that thou in thy lifetime receivedst thy good things, and likewise Lazarus evil things: but now he is comforted,
and thou art tormented.

26 And beside all this, between us and you there is a great gulf fixed:
so that they which would pass from hence to you cannot;
neither can they pass to us, that would come from thence.

The 'general designation' for the place of all the dead (lost or saved) was the Hebrew word 'Sheol' and the Greek word 'Hades.' It was a 'sub-terranian' (below the earth) place that included the grave and the pit. It's location was always referred to as 'down.' There are 13 verses that talk about 'going down to hell.' Here is one of them:

Psa 55:15 Let death seize upon them, and let them go down quick into hell:
for wickedness is in their dwellings, and among them.

In Jonah 2:2, Jonah says he 'cried out of the belly of hell.'

In vs. 3, he says God 'cast him into the deep.'

In vs. 6, he says he 'went down to the bottoms of the mountains,
and the earth had 'bars' about him.

Paradise, there in the heart of the earth, was the place where Father Abraham, comforted all his 'believing' children, and 'welcomed them home' in a sense.

Can't you just imagine how it must have comforted the heart of the repentant thief, as he suffered great physical pain and anguish on the cross next to the Lord, when Jesus told him they would be joined in a beautiful garden later that day?

Gardens are lovely, peaceful places people go to be refreshed and rest.

We've seen Paradise

- on earth --- in the Garden of Eden --- in 'Times Past'
- AND -- on earth again --- during the Kingdom Reign of Christ --- in the 'Ages to Come'
- under the earth --- in Hell, the place of the dead --- where it was 1 of 2 compartments.

Now, let's consider a 3rd location of

Paradise In Heaven Where God Lives

The apostle Paul's writings give us insight that Paradise is presently located in the 'Third Heaven' which is the abode of God. The Greek word used for that place has the idea of elevation, like the sky, in the air:

2 Cor 12:2-4 I knew a man in Christ above fourteen years ago, (whether in the body, I cannot tell; or whether out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)

such an one **caught up to the third heaven**.

3 And I knew such a man, (whether in the body, or out of the body, I cannot tell: God knoweth;)

4 How that he was **caught up into paradise**,

and heard unspeakable words, which it is not lawful for a man to utter.

That's where Paradise is during the 'dispensation of grace' in which we now live. We know that the Lord first went DOWN into the earth and then He was raised UP:

Eph 4:9-10 (Now that he ascended,

what is it but that he also descended first into the lower parts of the earth?

10 He that descended is the same also that ascended up far above all heavens, that he might fill all things.)

Now He's in Heaven, seated on the right hand of God the Father:

Heb 1:3 Who being the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and upholding all things by the word of his power, when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

During this 'intermittent time' of our Lord's delay to return to reign on the earth and restore Paradise here, we have a statement given by the apostle Paul to the Body of Christ, showing that we are waiting for our 'resurrection body':

Rom 8:23 And not only they, but ourselves also, which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.

God revealed some-what of a 'series' of revelations to Paul like 'installments' of a body of secret truth, termed 'the mystery' in scripture:

Acts 26:16 But rise, and stand upon thy feet: for I have appeared unto thee for this purpose, to make thee a minister and a witness both of these things which thou hast seen, and of those things in the which I will appear unto thee;

2 Cor 12:1 It is not expedient for me doubtless to glory. I will come to visions and revelations of the Lord.

These revelations concerned the position, blessings, and prospects of believers in this present dispensation of grace, who have trusted God's Son during this age of His rejection.

Paul had such a glorious experience UP in Paradise the 3rd Heaven, that God gave him something to humble him:

2 Cor 12:7 And lest I should be exalted above measure through the abundance of the revelations, there was given to me a thorn in the flesh, the messenger of Satan to buffet me, lest I should be exalted above measure.

What is ours by grace, we may now appropriate by faith alone. But the time will come when we enjoy our 'heavenly blessings' actually.

In the 'Ages to Come' the Paradise of God on earth will be open to the Paradise in Heaven:

- Israel and the Redeemed Nations on the earth
- and the Redeemed Body of Christ in the Heavens:

Israel is promised the earth forever:

Psa 78:68-69 But chose the tribe of Judah, the mount Zion which he loved.
69 And he built his sanctuary like high palaces,
like the earth which he hath established for ever.

Exo 32:13 Remember Abraham, Isaac, and Israel, thy servants, to whom thou swarest by thine own self, and saidst unto them, I will multiply your seed as the stars of heaven, and all this land that I have spoken of will I give unto your seed, and they shall inherit it for ever.

1 Chron 23:25 For David said, The LORD God of Israel hath given rest unto his people, that they may dwell in Jerusalem for ever:

Israel is 'staying here' on the earth. The Body of Christ is NOT staying here we're going UP there to Heaven:

1 Thess 4:16-17 For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God: and the dead in Christ shall rise first:

17 Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air: and so shall we ever be with the Lord.

So that in 'both places' (Heaven and Earth), Jesus Christ will be the supreme authority:

Col 2:10 And ye are complete in him, which is the head of all principality and power:

Paul repeatedly uses a phrase 'all things' both in Col. and Eph. to describe what Christ is the head of. It is clearly governmental authority both in heaven and earth:

Col 1:16-17 For by him were all things created,

- that are in heaven,
- and that are in earth,

visible (those are in earth) and invisible (those are in heaven),

(Here he lists exactly what those 'all things' are): whether they be

- thrones,
- or dominions,
- or principalities,
- or powers:

all things were created by him, and for him:

17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

We know where those governmental rulers are located in heaven and in earth:

Eph 1:10 That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him:

Paul's prayer is for us to understand these things:

Eph 1:18-23 The eyes of your understanding being enlightened;
that ye may know

- what is the hope of his calling,
- and what the riches of the glory of his inheritance in the saints,

19 • And what is the exceeding greatness of his power to us-ward who believe,
according to the working of his mighty power,

20 Which he wrought in Christ, when he raised him from the dead,
and set him at his own right hand in the heavenly places,

21 Far above all principality, and power, and might, and dominion,
and every name that is named,
not only in this world, but also in that which is to come:

22 And hath put all things under his feet,
and gave him **to be the head over all things** to the church,

23 Which is his body, the fulness of him that filleth all in all.

This is David Dowell, saying "Think about it!"